

Visitor Experience Brief

Erie Canal 2025 at Canalside

Thursday, November 3, 2022

THE CANAL
MARKS THE WEST
CANAL OPENED IN
RIED PRODUCTS
BETWEEN LAKE
HUDSON RIVER.
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Visitor Experience Brief Erie Canal 2025 at Canalside

The experience brief provides the context and guidelines for the EC2025@Canalside visitor experiences.

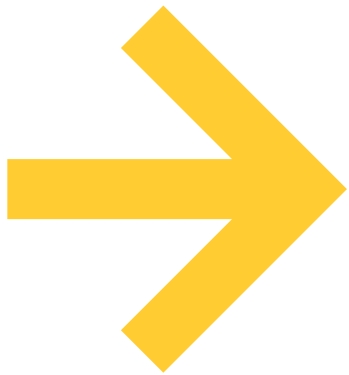
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Prior to the development of this document, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC), a subsidiary of Empire State Development (ESD), developed and published a Visitor Experience Plan¹ for the Erie Canal 2025 Bicentennial Commemoration at Canalside. The plan includes the EC2025@Canalside vision, mission, audiences, and interpretive themes. The Visitor Experience Brief contained herein is a critical supplement to that document.

The experience brief provides the context and guidelines for the EC2025@Canalside visitor experiences.

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01. **EC2025@Canalside**

To mark the **200th anniversary** of the opening of the **Erie Canal**, the ECHDC is planning the **Erie Canal 2025 Bicentennial Commemoration** at Canalside (EC2025@Canalside).

The canal's opening was a monumental cultural achievement for our nation and a momentous time for Buffalo. Celebrations will occur across New York State, but the commemoration at Canalside will be unique to **Buffalo, NY.**

Canalside

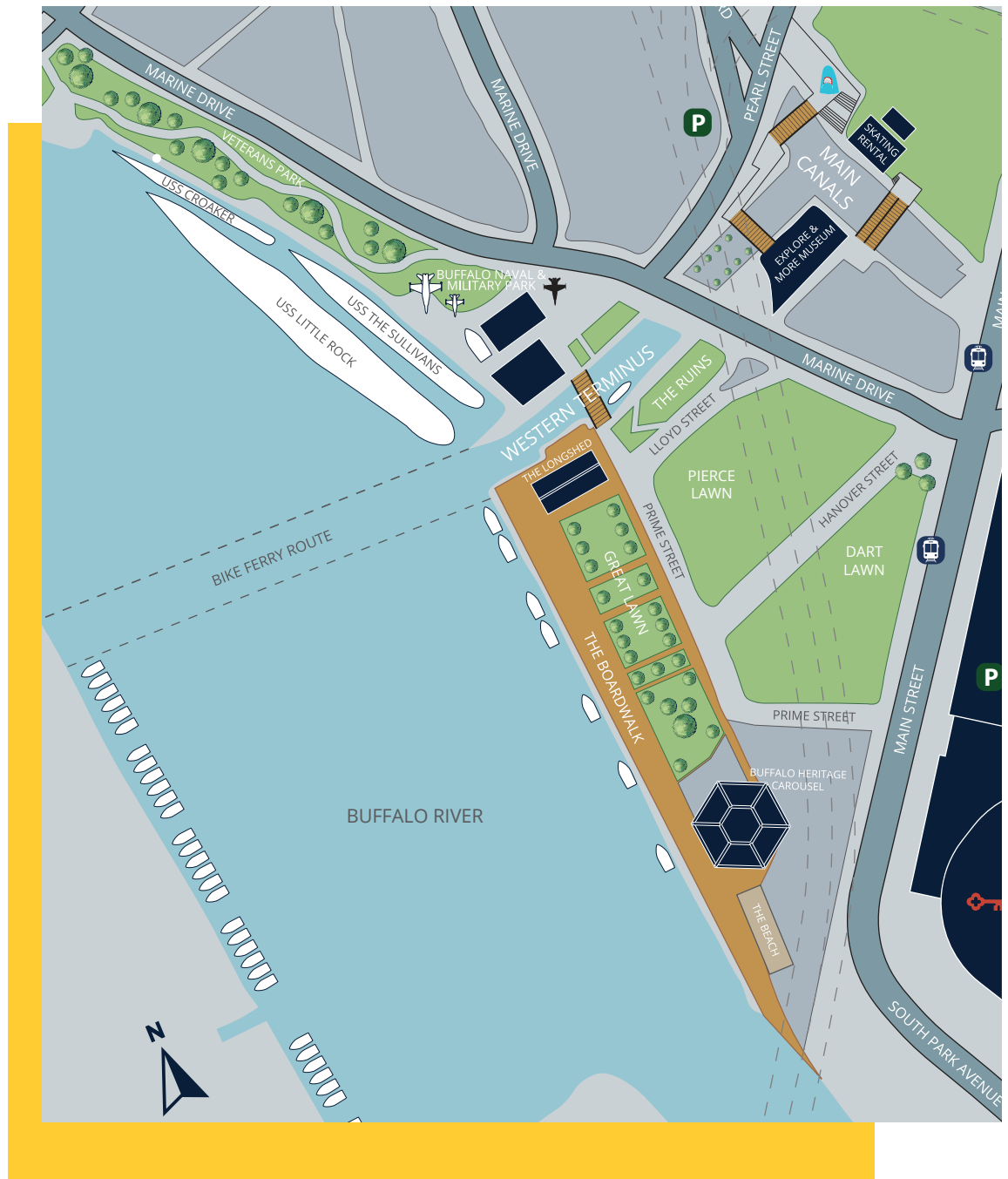
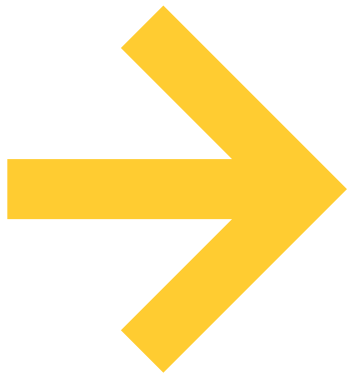


Figure 1: Current map of Canalside (Summer 2022)

Canalside sits on the site of the historic **Western Terminus of the Erie Canal**. It connects with the Buffalo River, near where the river meets Lake Erie and the mouth of the mighty Niagara River. Canalside includes property owned and managed by the ECHDC and the City of Buffalo. (Figure 1)

All EC2025 visitor experiences will occur at Canalside within the ECHDC-managed areas, including the Western Terminus and Ruins, The Longshed building, Main Canal, and adjacent towpaths. There may be an opportunity for visitor experiences to spill out into the city-owned properties, but that is contingent on several factors, including whether the city bids the properties out for development by 2025.

02. Location



03. **SUMMER 2025**

EC2025@Canalside will occur during the summer of 2025. The festivities will begin at the end of May, **starting on Memorial Day Weekend**, and conclude at the **end of September**.

The 200th anniversary of **the opening of the Erie Canal occurs on a Sunday, October 26, 2025**. The ECHDC is planning a weekend of events and programs to mark this remarkable day in **Buffalo's history**.

04. Stakeholders

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC)

For over a decade, the ECHDC, a subsidiary of Empire State Development, has spearheaded projects along Buffalo's waterfront to help the City and Western New York realize a vision of renewed prosperity.

The work ECHDC is doing at Canalside and the Outer Harbor, including newly developed waterfront access, new buildings, public spaces, events, and activities where there once were none, are helping to drive the area's resurgence.

The Canal History Advisory Group (CHAG)

The Canalside History Advisory Group (CHAG) was formed several years ago to help guide ECHDC on projects and programming to ensure the historical relevance of Canalside continues to be woven into the fabric of the site.

The group comprises approximately 15 volunteer members and is chaired by Mike Vogel, an ECHDC Board Member.



05. Historical Context

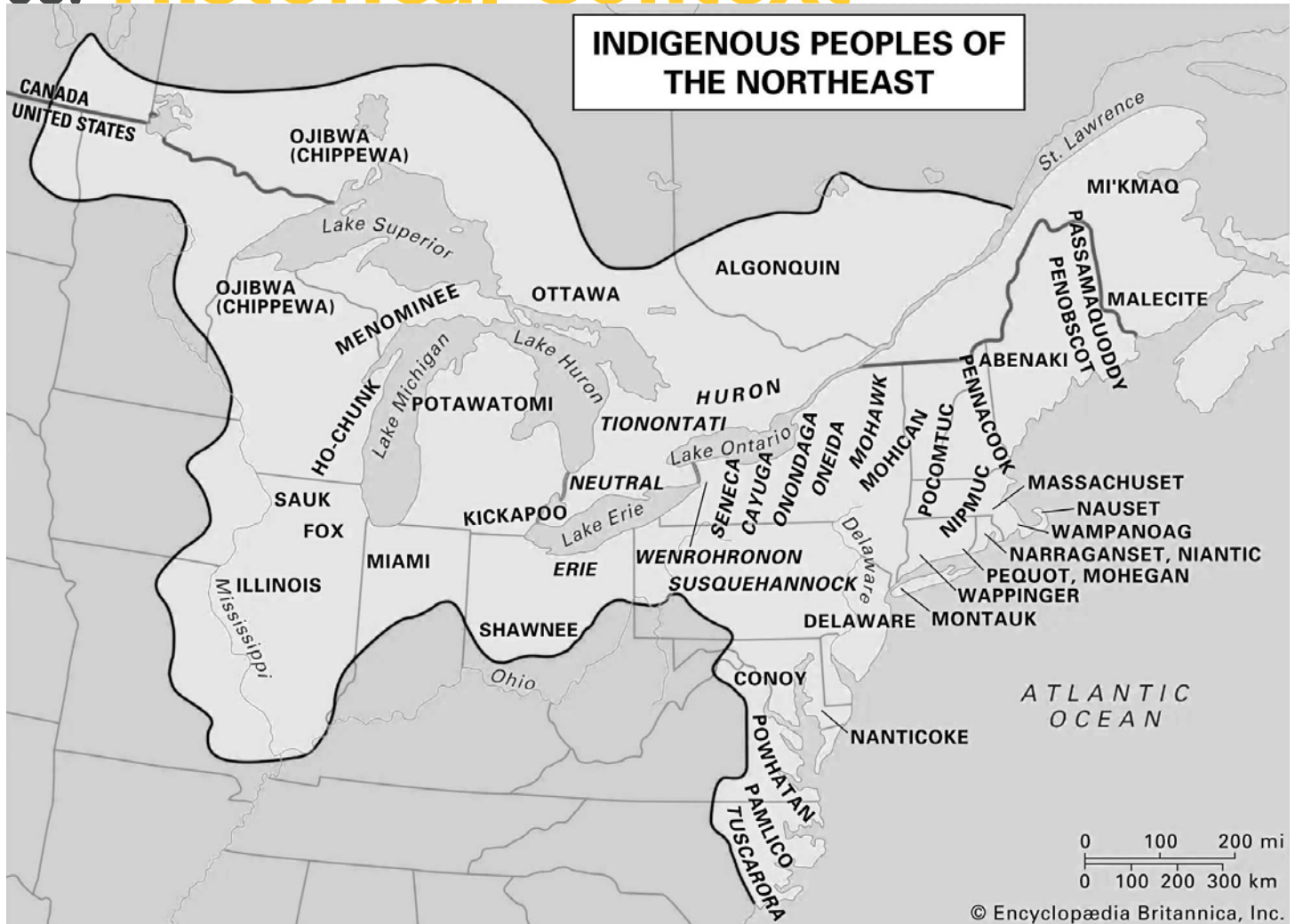


Figure 2: Indigenous Peoples of the Northeast

The development of the Erie Canal was the spark that ignited Buffalo's meteoric rise and the United States' expansion Westward between 1825 and 1900. Conversely, there was an equal, but inverse impact on the Indigenous People whose traditional homelands were systematically dispossessed in the name of economic development.

Traditionally, Canalside was home "to many nations, including the Neutral, Erie, Weno, Huron, and other peoples. Today, these lands are still regarded as being the traditional homelands of the Seneca (People of the Great Hill) and other Haudenosaunee (People Who Build a House) peoples,"² including Tuscarora, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk. (Figure 2)

The traditional homelands of the Seneca (People of the Great Hill).

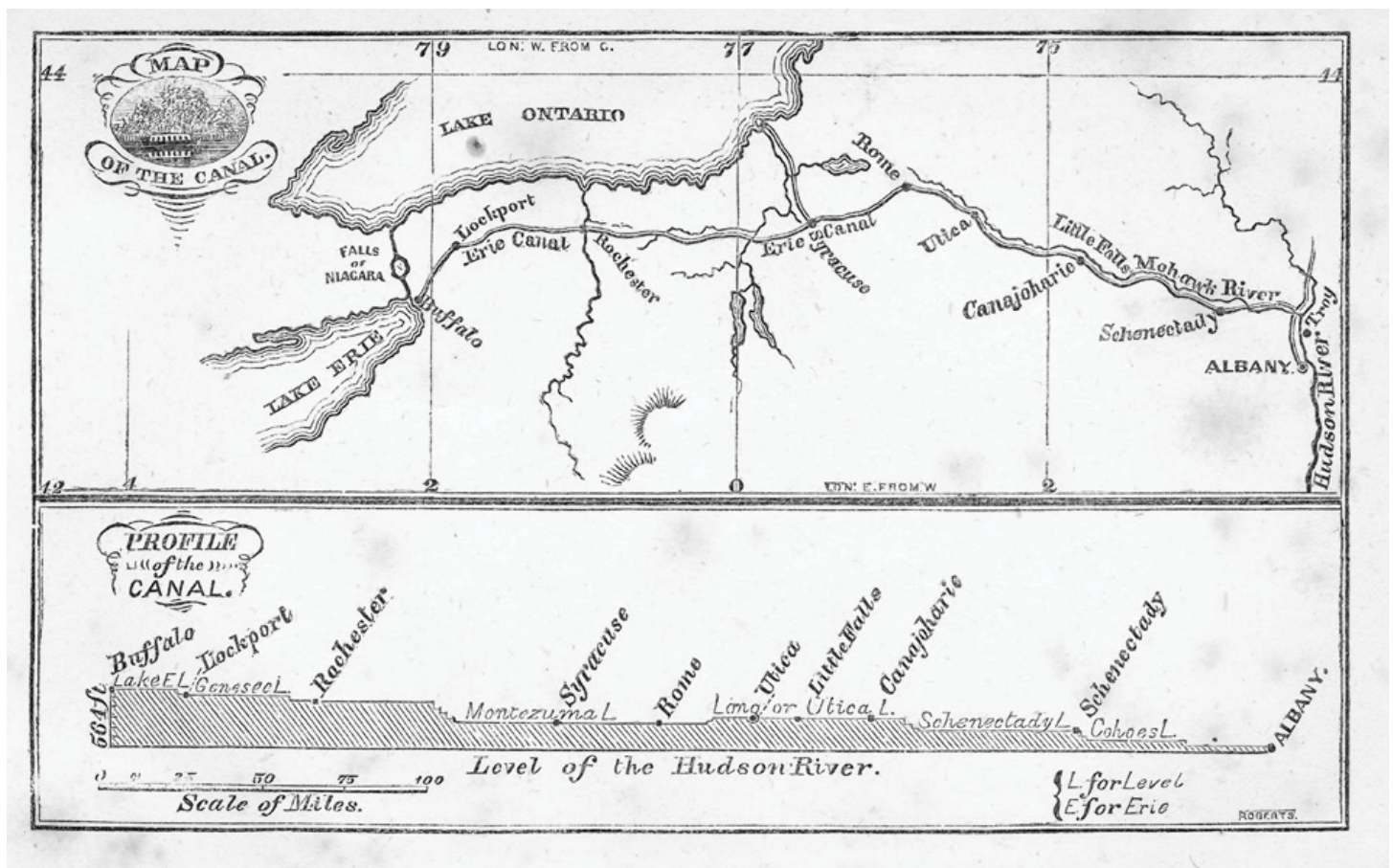


Figure 3: Map and Profile of the Erie Canal, 1852

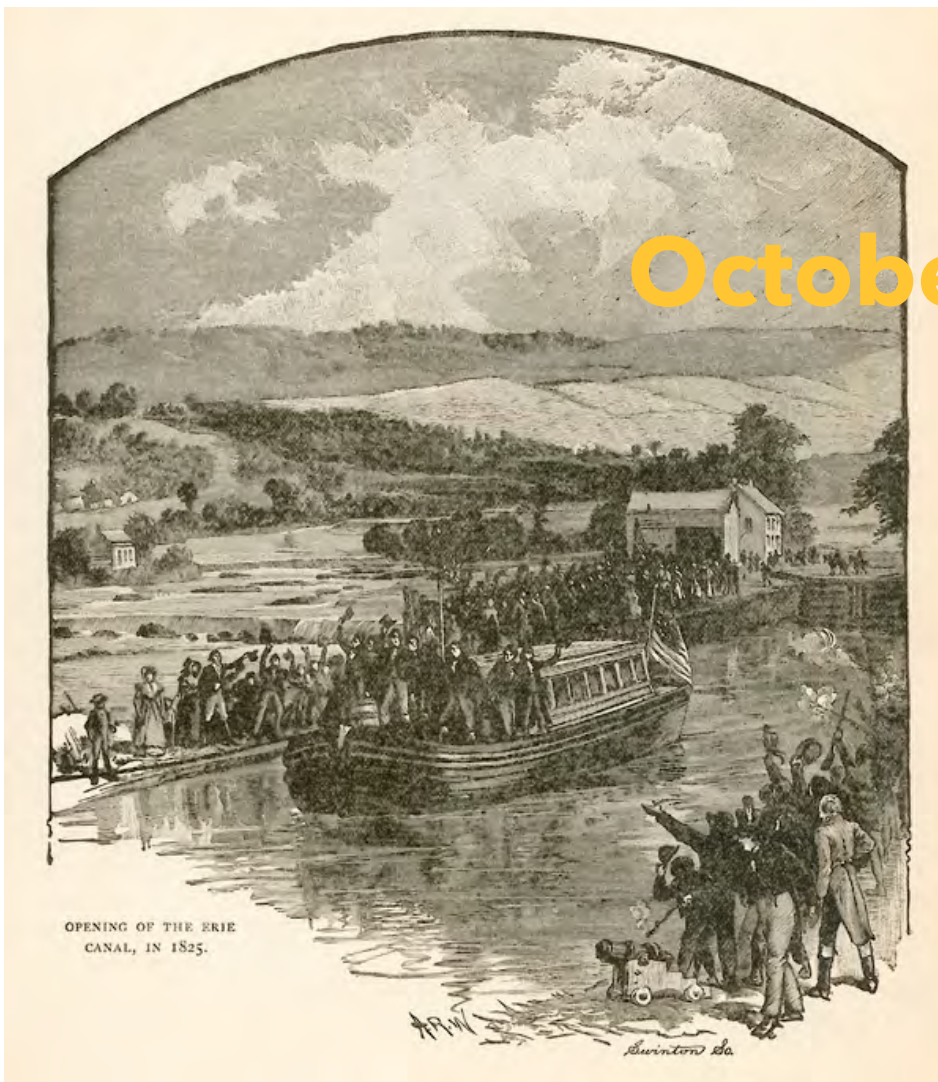


Figure 4: Digging the Deep Cut in Lockport, NY, Engraving by George Catlin, 1825

Built by hand

The construction of the Canal began in Rome, NY, in 1817, was completed eight years later, and cost New York State nearly eight million dollars. **The 363 miles-long artificial waterway stretched from Lake Erie to the Hudson River in Albany, NY,** boasted 83 locks and 18 aqueducts permitting “boats to travel a total of 675 feet up and down from one end to another.”³ (Figure 3)

A feat of engineering, the Erie Canal was built by hand, with brute strength, sheer grit, with the aid of black explosive powder. Bernstein notes how canal laborers “dug and hacked through dense forests and built over rivers and valleys with nothing more than bare hands, shovels and axes, mules, explosive powder, and crude but ingenious inventions.”⁴ (Figure 4)



October 26, 1825

Figure 5: DeWitt Clinton On-board the Seneca Chief
Opening the Erie Canal in Buffalo, 1825

On October 26, 1825, New York State Governor, Dewitt Clinton, opened the Erie Canal in the Village of Buffalo, NY, at the Western Terminus, now referred to as Canalside.

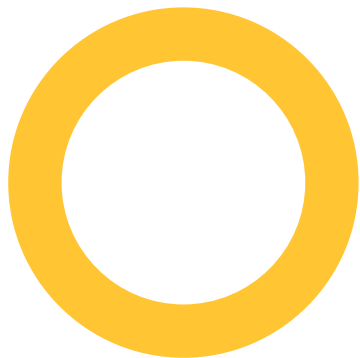
The day was marked with a celebratory parade, music, speeches, feast, and "revelries well into the night."⁵ The day's events culminated when the packet boat, Seneca Chief, Governor Clinton, other dignitaries, and an entourage of other boats departed Buffalo with "robust cheers from the crowds on the shores."⁶ (Figure 5)

The discharge of firearms and a thirty-two-pound cannon announced the official opening of the canal. Artillery fired in succession from the Western Terminus, across the state to Albany, down the Hudson River to New York, and back to Buffalo to signal the historic news to eager communities along the canal.



Figure 6: DeWitt Clinton Wedding the Waters from Lake Erie with the Atlantic Ocean in New City Harbor

Eight days later, on November 4th, Governor Clinton reached New City harbor for a extraordinary celebration and to perform the "Wedding of the Waters." Taking "two elegant wooden kegs decorated with eagles"⁷ filled with water from Lake Erie, the Governor ceremoniously poured them into the harbor, marrying the waters of the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean. (Figure 6)



November 4, 1825

WEDDING OF THE WATERS

Historical Context | 08

The opening of the Erie Canal changed the nation & Buffalo forever.

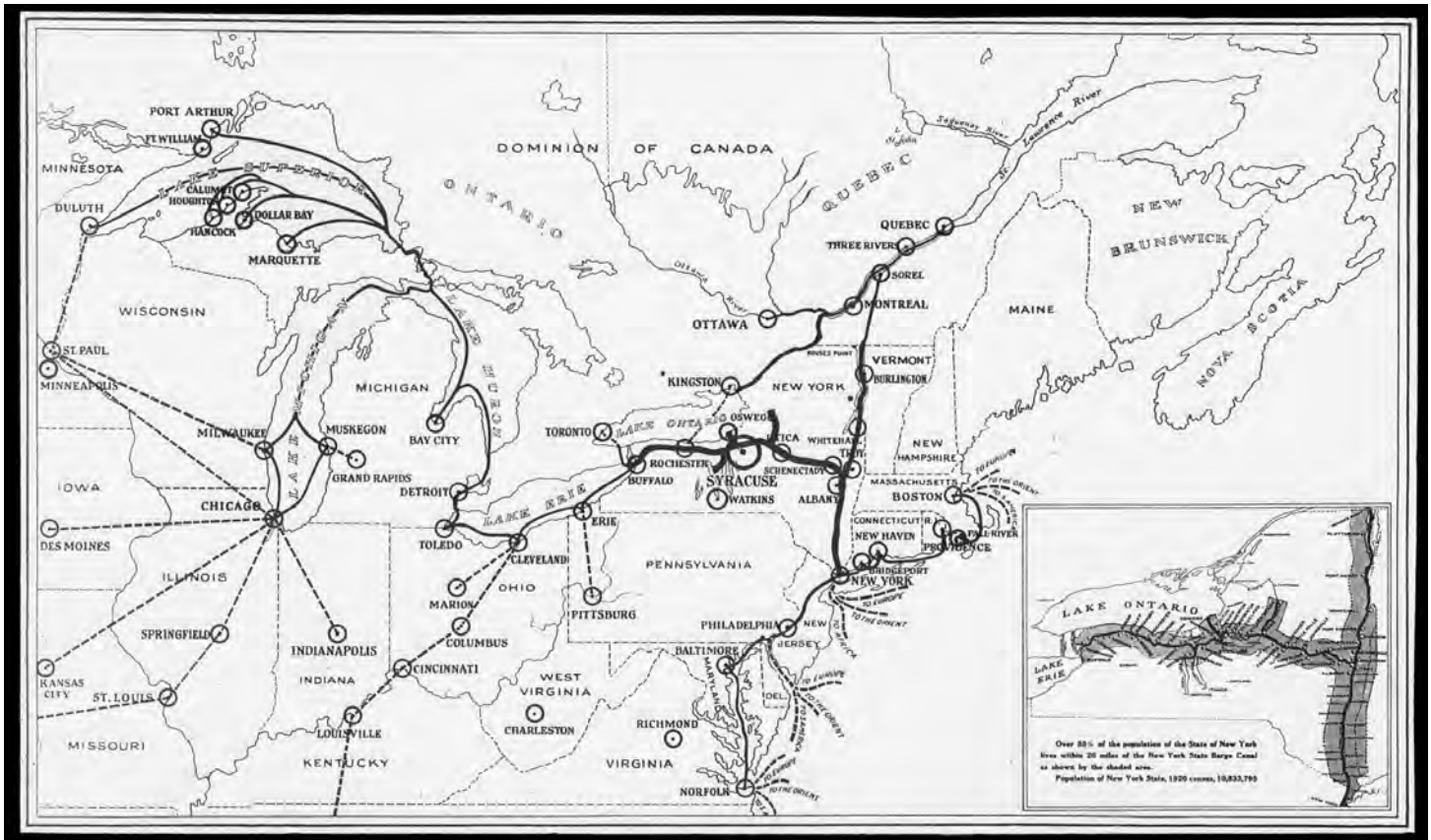


Figure 7: Shipping Using Inland Routes, 1920s

The opening of the Erie Canal realized the dream of creating a “Bond of Union” connecting the Atlantic seaboard with the Midwest and changed the nation and Buffalo forever. The Canal propelled Buffalo into an essential and influential commercial epicenter for the country and the world, expanding a fledgling but confident nation west and east across the Atlantic to Europe. (Figure 7)



Figure 8: Buffalo's Central Wharf circa 1915

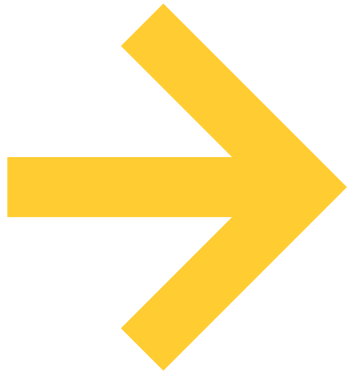
In less than a century, the Erie Canal transformed the Village of Buffalo into a major city. Buffalo became a thriving and bustling transshipment port for goods, people, and ideas moving from New York City to the Great Lakes and visa-versa, and to and from European ports and cities. (Figure 8)

Peter L. Bernstein notes in his book, *Wedding of the Waters*:

"By bringing the interior to the seas and seas into the interior, The Erie Canal would shape a great nation, knit the sinews of the Industrial Revolution, propel globalization...and revolutionize the production and supply of food for the entire world."⁸(Bernstein 2005, 22)

Consequently, when the Erie Canal opened in 1825, Buffalo "was a middling village of 2,400 people, barely rebuilt after having been burned by the British during the War of 1812."⁹ By 1900, America's original "Gateway to the West" had become the eighth largest city in the United States, the "sixth busiest port in the world, and had a population of 352,387."¹⁰

In 1901, when Theodore Roosevelt was inaugurated as president in Buffalo, the city it had produced two presidents (Millard Fillmore and Grover Cleveland) and was recognized as one of the great cities in the United States, growing to "great prominence in less than a century."¹¹



06. **RATIONALE**

Understanding the **history of the Erie Canal** and its relationship to **Buffalo's development is key** to understanding why the bicentennial commemoration is **vital to Western New York, New York State, and the nation.**

Consequently, ECHDC's rationale for planning the EC2025@Canalside is to **connect visitors** from Western New York, Southern Ontario, and the State **to Buffalo's 200-year-old Erie Canal heritage** to knit the city's past with its present and future.

EC2025@Canalside will help the ECHDC realize its **mission to revitalize Western New York's waterfront** and "restore economic growth to Western New York, based on the region's **legacy of pride, urban significance, and natural beauty.**"¹²

07. Nature of Visitor Experiences

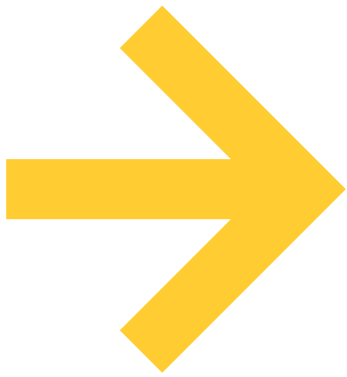
The ECHDC aims to share this remarkable story with visitors **in a social-recreational context by creating fun, festive, participative, and engaging experiences** to help them connect to Buffalo's 200-year-old Erie Canal history and **create once-in-a-lifetime memories.**

Most audiences will likely be familiar with the general history of the Erie Canal and aware that its Western Terminus is in Buffalo. Still, most visitors will not be intimate with Buffalo's storied relationship with it.

Consequently, to share the EC2025@Canalside story, the ECHDC envisions **providing visitors of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds with multiple pathways and a wide range of experiences** to reconnect with a familiar story, engage with new content, and meet visitors where they are in a personal sense.

A person wearing a shark costume is sitting on a bench in the foreground, looking out over the Erie Canal. The background shows a row of historic brick buildings along the canal. The entire image has a yellow tint.

CONNECTING BUFFALO'S
PAST WITH IT'S FUTURE



Several facilitated sessions were held with the CHAG to envision the nature of the experiences the ECHDC would employ at EC2025@Canalside **to make the commemoration an entertaining and participative experience** for visitors and connect to Buffalo's Erie Canal heritage.

Many different types of experiences were shared and discussed during the visioning sessions. However, **the following six emerged as the best approaches** to help bring the Western Terminus and Buffalo's historic Canal District to life for visitors during the EC2025@Canalside.

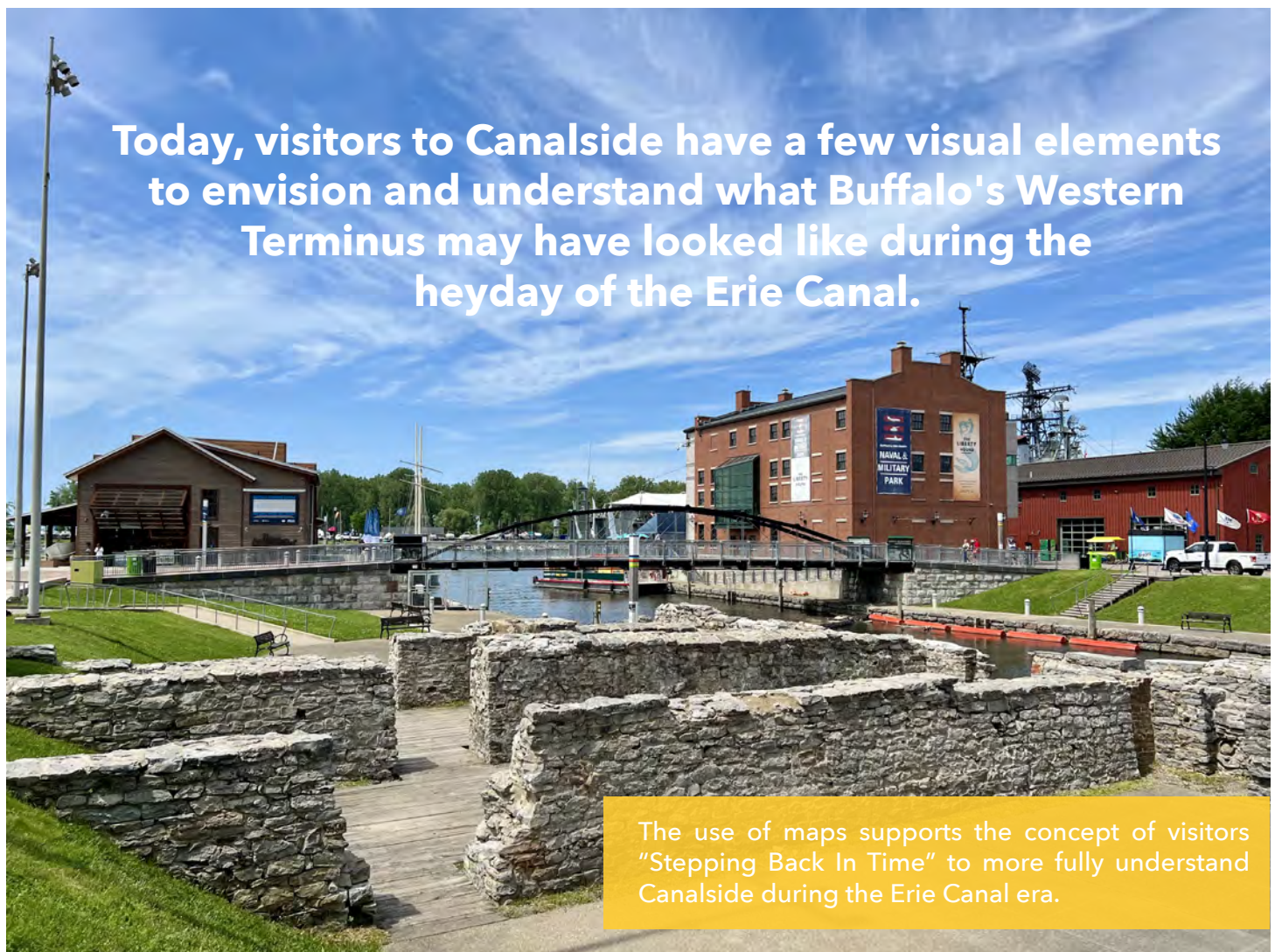


Stepping Back in Time

During the visioning session, **each of the six experiences identified above received nearly the same number of tallies**, with numbers 1 and 6 only separated by five.

Consequently, each experience is unique in its own right, **but taken as a whole support the overriding concept that the nature of experiences** for EC2025@Canalside help visitors to **“Step Back In Time.”** This message deeply resonated with CHAG members during the visioning session, agreeing that the five other experiences supported this approach.

The reasons why CHAG members identified these types of experiences are explored in more depth on the following pages.



Today, visitors to Canalside have a few visual elements to envision and understand what Buffalo's Western Terminus may have looked like during the heyday of the Erie Canal.

The use of maps supports the concept of visitors "Stepping Back In Time" to more fully understand Canalside during the Erie Canal era.

Figure 9: Excavated Western Terminus & Ruins

Large-scale artifacts include the historic Western Terminus and excavated Ruins of the building foundations lining its towpath. (Figure 9) Newly recreated elements include historically aligned faux streets, boardwalks, canals, and towpaths. Still, there is an urgent need for an overall visitor experience that pulls these disconnected and detached elements together, tells a cohesive story, and brings Buffalo's Erie Canal heritage to life for visitors.

Visitors exploring Canalside, find it challenging to fully grasp what the area looked like during its various transformations from a rural village when the Erie Canal opened in 1825 to a thriving transshipment port in the nineteenth century.

To remedy this deficit, CHAG members envisioned **using physical and virtual maps** to help visitors visualize and grasp the "evolution of the site over time."

Some comments generated from the CHAG visioning session included:

- "[Include a] three-dimensional model of Canalside as it was in 1860."
- "What did a particular view look like from a particular spot?"
- "[Include] maps, 3D models, physical, virtual."

Visitors can see, hear, touch, smell, and taste the past.

Stepping Back In Time provides visitors with the opportunity to catch a glimpse and experience what it was like to travel through, live near, or work at the Commercial Slip and the Canal District during Buffalo's Erie Canal era.

What was it like to be at the juncture of Little and Big Buffalo Creeks on the Western edge of Lake Erie before the Erie Canal was built when it was the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, the Iroquois confederacy of Six Nations? (Figure 10)



Figure 10: View of Big Buffalo Creek & Lake Erie, 1811

What was it like to be at the celebration of the opening of the Erie Canal 200 years ago in the Village of Buffalo when the packet boat, Seneca Chief, Governor Clinton, and his entourage departed for Albany, NY?

What was it like to be a merchant, immigrant, canawler, trader, Native American, or freedom seeker in Buffalo during the 1850s when the Western Terminus/Commercial Slip and the Canal District were a beehive of activity with boats, brothels, beer halls, saloons, and theaters? (Figure 11)



Figure 11: Western Terminus/Commercial Slip circa 1885

What would travelers have experienced in Buffalo at the beginning of the 20th century when it was the "sixth busiest port in the world, and had a population of 352,387." ¹³

Ideas generated at the visioning session included many mentions of stepping back in time:

- **"I want to travel back in time to 1825, 1840, 1870."**
- **"Travel back in time-what would a building look like in 1825, 1840, 1853?"**
- **"How do we foster connection? I go in, feel part of the scene, not a spectator."**
- **"Allow the visitor to walk through the district in 1850 to get a sense of the place, sights, and sounds."**

The concept of **"stepping back in time"** creates a wholly immersive experience where visitors can see, hear, touch, smell, and taste the past in a compelling, entertaining, and memorable way.

Sharing Human/Hidden Histories

The story of Buffalo's Erie Canal is about people.

Below are just a handful of people and communities who have had a lasting impact on Buffalo's Erie Canal heritage.



Figure 12: Iroquois Reservations in Western New York, 1797



Figure 13: Joseph Ellicott

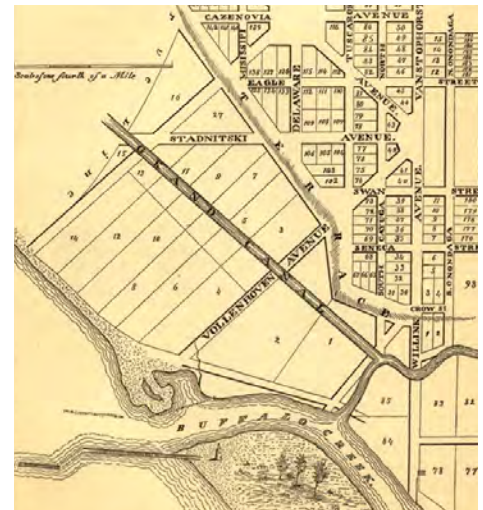


Figure 14: 1825 Village of Buffalo Map Showing Wilkeson's Harbor

Haudenosaunee

The story begins with the Iroquois confederacy of Six Nations, or Haudenosaunee (hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee), the "People Who Build a House."¹⁴

Following the end of America's War of Independence in 1783, the Haudenosaunee were systematically dispossessed of their traditional territories through a series of treaties with the United States government. Some of these territories included what soon after became the Village of New Amsterdam (now Buffalo), where the Erie Canal's Western Terminus would be located. (Figure 12)

Joseph Ellicott

The treaties set the stage for the Holland Land Company to purchase the land, and Joseph Ellicott, (Figure 13) a surveyor, to create the street plan for the village in 1797. Undeterred by the British burning the town to the ground during the War of 1812, settlers immediately began returning to rebuild.

Samuel Wilkeson

By 1817, construction began on the Erie Canal in Rome, NY. Eager to reap its potential economic benefits, Buffalo fought to be the Grand Canal's Western Terminus. Judge Samuel Wilkeson, frequently called the "Father of Buffalo," a freight forwarder and vessel owner,¹⁵ provides a brilliant plan and oversees the creation of a harbor for docking vessels at the outlet of Big Buffalo Creek at Lake Erie.¹⁵ (Figure 14)

Consequently, in 1822, the Village of Buffalo was selected as the Western Terminus of the Erie Canal.



Figure 15: DeWitt Clinton 1823



Figure 16: Joseph Dart circa 1870



Figure 17: 1872 Map of Buffalo's Congested Canal District

DeWitt Clinton

Governor DeWitt Clinton was a New York State assemblyman, senator, lieutenant governor, Mayor of New York City, a presidential candidate, and a two-term governor of New York State. Clinton was the driving force behind building the canal, and many would fervently argue, "there might never have been an Erie Canal without his unwavering support and readiness to risk his career on the canal's success."¹⁶ (Figure 15)

Commonly referred to as "Clinton's Ditch" or "Clinton's Folly," his dream came to fruition on October 26, 1825, when he officially opened the Erie Canal in Buffalo at the Western Terminus.

Joseph Dart (Figure 16)

The Erie Canal turned Buffalo into the "greatest inland port in the United States,"¹⁷ for goods, especially grain, moving from the Great Lakes to New York City.

In 1842, the laborious process of transferring the grain by hand from Great Lake schooners to canal boats and visa-versa dramatically changed when Joseph Dart built the first steam-powered grain elevator and storage warehouse.

The invention completely transformed the grain industry. Fifteen years after Dart's invention, ten new grain elevators dotted Buffalo's inner harbor, by the early twentieth-century, there were over 40 operating on Buffalo's Waterfront.¹⁸

Immigrants

Great waves of 19th Century immigration flowed through East Coast ports - Boston, Montreal, New York - to Buffalo.

Hundreds of thousands of immigrants left canal boats or traveled by wagonload from New England and Pennsylvania to board schooners and steamships at the Canal District's docks for the passage farther west. Many stayed to build Buffalo, an ethnically diverse city that grew exponentially through the decades after the opening of the Erie Canal.¹⁹

In the book *America's Crossroads*, Professor Marvin Rapp wrote, "Too few realize that more immigrants passed through these streets during the height of the canal era than passed through Ellis Island."²⁰ (Figure 17)

African Americans

Western New York played a significant role in the pre-Civil War story of the Underground Railroad, and the Canal District played a substantial part in that. The Canal District offered a port on an international border, the last stop on the path to freedom in Canada.

Notably, the District was home to one of the earliest African-American neighborhoods in Buffalo. For example, William Wells Brown, who worked on the lakes boats here, was a key figure, playing a prominent role as a speaker and abolitionist, and used his job to escort fugitives to safety.²¹(Figure 18)

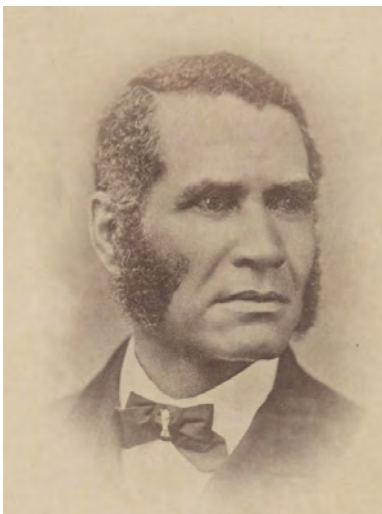


Figure 18: An Escaped enslaved person, William Wells Brown, Moved His Family to Buffalo in the 1840s and Worked on a Lake Erie Steamboat and as a Conductor on the Underground Railroad

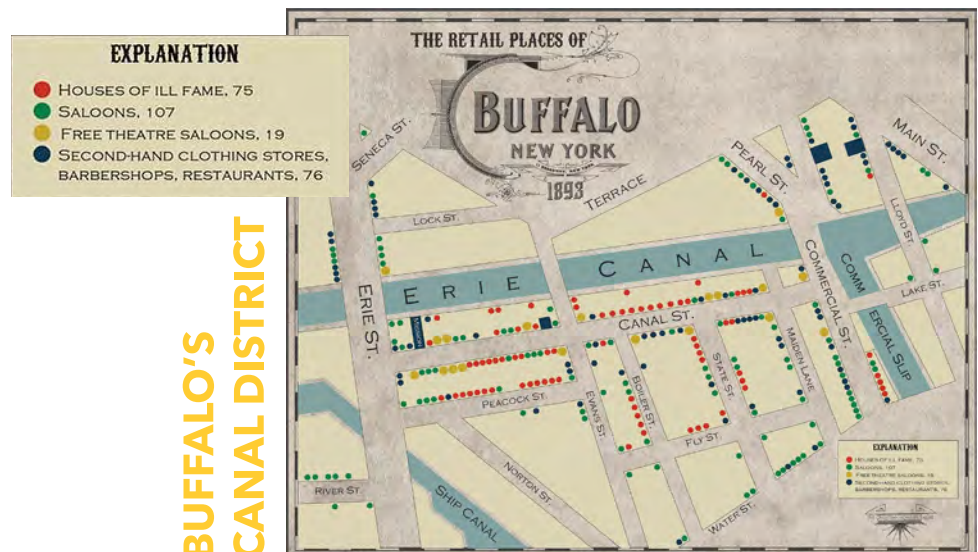


Figure 19: 1893 Map of the "Houses of Ill-Fame" in the Canal District

People of the Canal District

The Canal District was an internationally important thoroughfare that welcomed burgeoning waterfront industries and became a center of trade and wealth for the city it built.²²

Lake sailors finishing their voyages from the West and "canawlers" completing their journeys from the East were willing and eager to spend their new-found earnings in the district. Not surprisingly, many "commercial" enterprises sprung up and flourished, including brothels, beer halls, saloons, hotels, and theaters whose patrons included merchants, immigrants, canawlers, traders, Native Americans, and freedom seekers. Known as the "infected district," the area became legendary, a notorious red light district recognized as one of the roughest waterfronts in the world.²³ (Figure 19)

Comments generated from the visioning session included:

- **"Meet the various people who lived and worked in the Canal District. Help to connect to someone like me."**
- **"I want to learn about the Indigenous and African American communities who were a part of the Canal District. Tell me about the saloons, brothels, theaters, and other businesses."**
- **"Have visitors learn about the people and businesses that came from the District and changed the city, state, and nation."**
- **"Depict residents, immigrants, canawlers, sailors-people the exhibit space. Let people pick an ID and be an immigrant, canawler, etc., and learn the story as they pass through."**

Use of Historical Interpreters

Historical interpreters are used to great effect **at many living history museums** like the Cherokee Heritage Center, Colonial Williamsburg, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, and Plimoth Patuxet Museums, to name a few.

Using historical interpreters at EC2025@Canalside **will bring the complex and fascinating story of the Erie Canal to life** and help visitors **“Step Back In Time”** and **connect Buffalo’s past with the present and future.**

Historical interpreters for EC2025@Canalside could potentially include various people from the following communities that populated Buffalo during the Erie Canal era:



Figure 20: Red Jacket, or Sagoyewatha, a Seneca Orator and Chief of the Wolf Clan



Figure 21: Irish immigrants disembarking at New York, 1855.



Figure 22: Harriet Tubman, 1895, Guided Escaped Enslaved Persons to Canada

Haudenosaunee

What was it like to be a displaced Seneca Iroquois who, forced off their homeland to make way for the canal, had to find a new place to live, hunt, grow food, and fight for their culture's survival, or assimilate into American culture? (Figure 20)

Immigrants

What was it like to be a foreigner departing a packet boat at the Western Terminus of the Erie Canal at the immigrant steps, not familiar with the language, carrying everything you own on your back, and little money? (Figure 21)

Escaped Enslaved Persons

What was it like as an escaped enslaved person finally reaching the mouth of the Niagara River, a river crossing away from freedom? Who helped to hide and protect you as you traveled west on the canal to Buffalo? Who helped you make the final leg of the journey to freedom, and how did you get there? (Figure 22)



Figure 23a: Buffalo's Central Wharf, 1868

Canal District Entrepreneurs

The most common types of businesses found in the Canal District were beer halls, saloons, brothels, and theaters. Consequently, what jobs were available to people living in the city? Who were some of the people you would encounter, and what type of stories would they tell you? What was it like to be an immigrant working as a courtesan in the red light district of Canalside? What was it like to be a performer in a minstrel show? What was it like to be a bartender in the beer halls and saloons, and who were some of the people you would meet? (Figure 23a & 23b)

Comments generated during the visioning session included:

- **"Use first-person interpreters."**
- **"Period costumes, storytellers, and workers."**
- **"Jesse Hawley marveling at the Erie Canal's completion."**
- **"There are vendors and actors-[similar to] Colonial Williamsburg."**



Figure 23b: Central Wharf's of Balconies, circa 1870

Immersive Experiences: Engaging the Five Senses

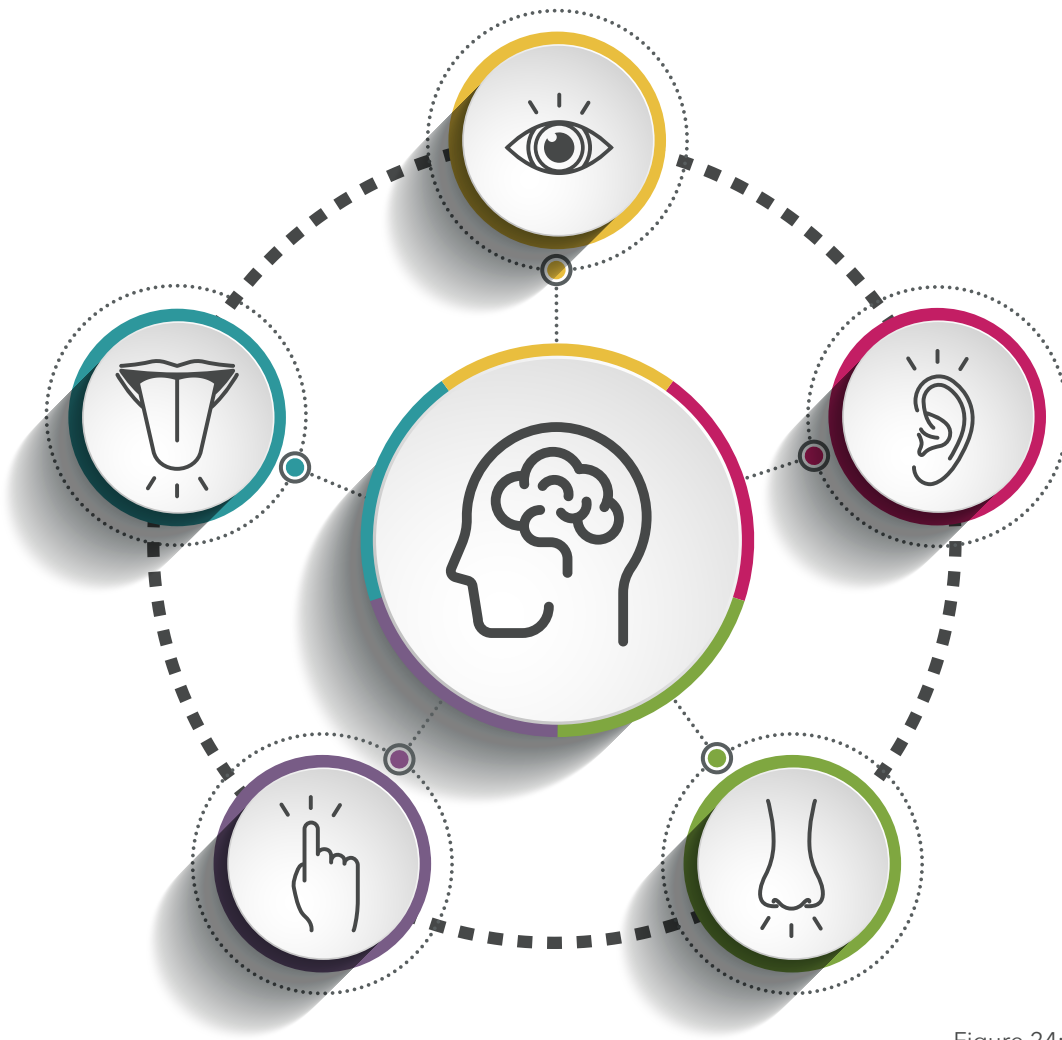


Figure 24: Five Senses Diagram

Immersive experiences that engage the five senses support the overriding concept that EC2025@Canalside help visitors to **"Step Back In Time."**

Consequently, as Dodd notes, an immersive experience creates a **"synesthetic opportunity"** where all the senses are engaged **"with the visual reinforcing the tactile, the physical reinforcing the intellectual."**²⁴ (Figure 24)

Comments from the CHAG visioning session included:

- **"Immersive using all 5 senses. In the shoes of a person who was there."**
- **"Must be immersive and interactive."**
- **"Surround sound experiences (singing, whistling, chanting) day and night."**
- **"Video, food cooking, smells, soundscapes, tactile-touch and feel."**

Hands-On/Minds-On Experiences

The hands-on and minds-on approach to visitor experiences refers to the process of active learning. **Hands-on learning** refers to **learning by doing** or "through physical interaction with the world"²⁵ whereas **minds-on learning** requires visitors to **think through what they are doing**.



Figure 25: Visitors Participate in Building a Replica of the Packet Boat, Seneca Chief, by Hand.

The idea is to combine being both physically & mentally active when it comes to creating experiences for visitors. As Confucius reputedly said in 450BC, **"Tell Me, and I Will Forget; Show Me, and I May Remember; Involve Me, and I Will Understand."** Consequently, when visitors are physically and mentally engaged, they activate different parts of the brain, strengthening two development processes simultaneously, leading to more robust and meaningful visitor experiences. At the time of the opening of the Erie Canal, many processes were still done by hand, digging canals, building canal boats and lake vessels, barrel-building, transferring grain from ships, building houses and buildings, making clothes, etc. Including hands-on minds-on experiences helps visitors to "Step Back In Time" to connect the past with the present and future. (Figure 25)

Below are some of the comments made regarding active learning during the visioning session for EC2025@Canalside:

- **"Free-choice learning experiences that appeal to all ages and abilities."**
- **"Interactive boat/play area."**
- **"Demonstrators and visitors doing maritime crafts (rope and barrel making)."**
- **"Role play: life on a canal boat-meals, tasks, activities, and conditions."**
- **"Hands on opportunities: build a canal boat, raise a sail."**

08. EC2025@Canalside Experiences

The nature of experiences generated and discussed at the CHAG visioning session directly informed how the group envisioned integrating them into the three significant destinations at Canalside.

The overall concept is to utilize the **Longshed, Western Terminus and Ruins, and Main Canals and Towpaths** in the following ways to help visitors “Step Back In Time” at EC2025@canalside:

- **The Longshed** (visitor center, multi-media presentation)
- **Western Terminus and Ruins** (human history interpretation)
- **Main Canals and Towpaths** (evening history projection show)

Utilizing Canalside in this way will ensure that the entire ECHDC-managed areas are activated and support the six experiences identified by CHAG.

CONNECTING BUFFALO'S PAST WITH IT'S FUTURE

The Longshed Experience



Figure 26: The Longshed at the Junction of the Western Terminus and Buffalo River

Building

The Longshed situates at the Western Terminus entrance, where it meets the Buffalo River. There is roughly 3,000-square-foot of usable space for the initial visitor experience. The challenge will be to design the visitor experience so people can flow through the building without feeling too overly congested on peak traffic days. (Figure 26, 27a & 27b)

Experience

The concept for the Longshed is to use the main hall for the initial EC2025@Canalside experience as a visitor/interpretive center and point of entry for the Erie Canal story. Visitors will be encouraged to begin their experience in the Longshed before heading out to the other Canalside destinations to continue their journey.

Multi-Media Presentation

Tentatively, the Longshed visitor experience centers on creating a multi-media presentation that summarizes Buffalo's 200-year-old Erie Canal story potentially using a short film, maps (3D, virtual, or both), virtual reality, or other interpretive devices.

The presentation would describe in a compelling and engaging way how Canalside transformed from the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee to a rural village at the Erie Canal's 1825 opening to a thriving transshipment port at the end of the nineteenth century.

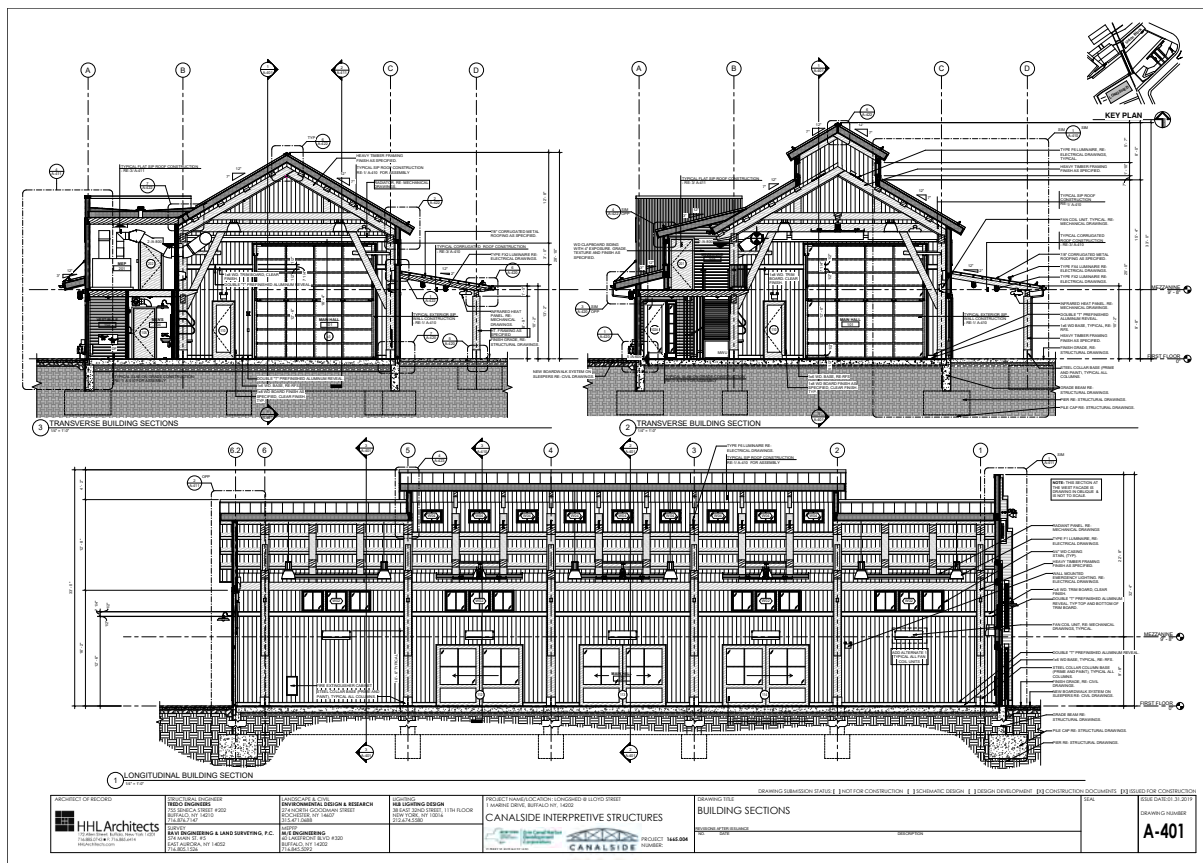


Figure 27a: Longshed Exterior Elevations

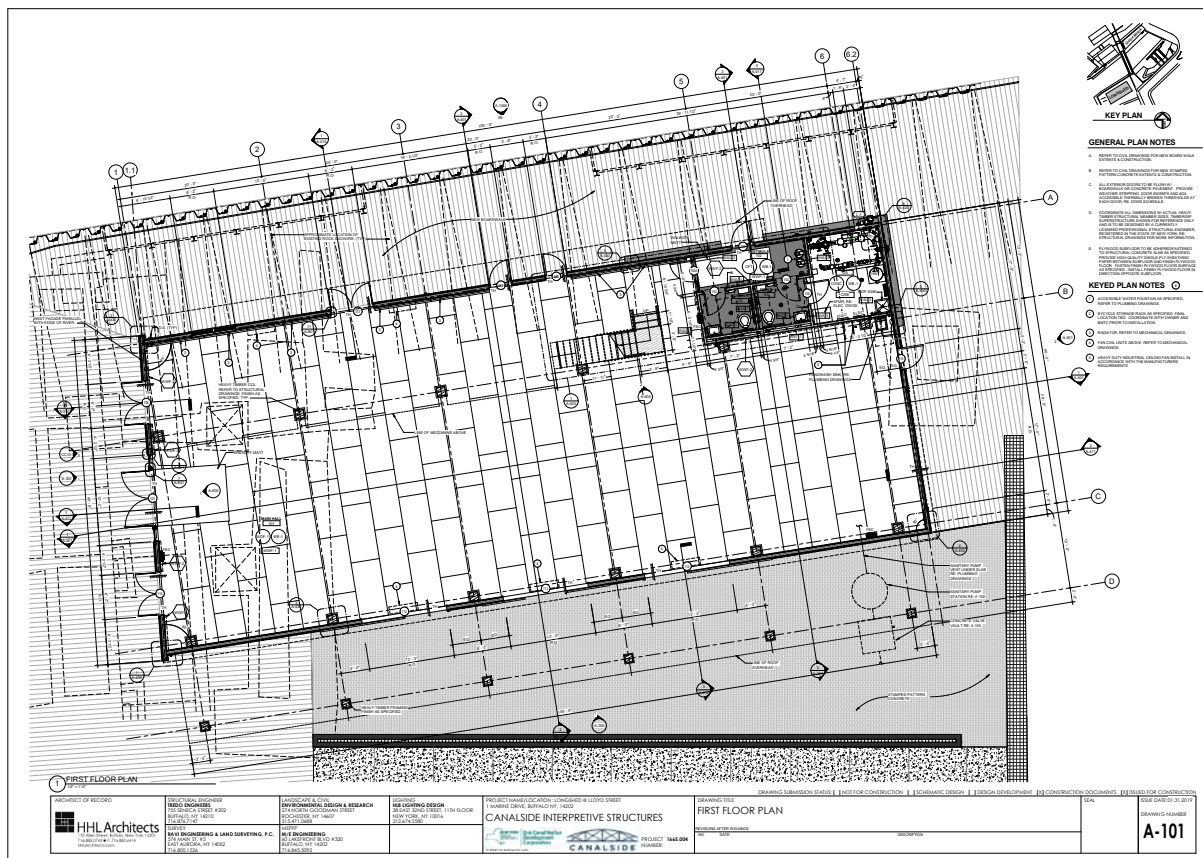


Figure 27b: Interior Floor Plan

The ECHDC and CHAG are not wholly committed to this style of experience if another seems more appropriate. However, this approach appears to be an intriguing and engaging way to share a complex story and simultaneously appeal to a diverse audience that includes people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Example

The Chicago Architecture Center's is currently using this style of visitor experience in their "Chicago City Model Experience" exhibit. (<https://www.architecture.org/exhibits/exhibit/chicago-city-model-experience/>) (Figure 28)

Exhibits

The ECHDC and CHAG also envision using a series of stand-alone exhibits/interactive kiosks to supplement the multi-media presentation and communicate the key EC2025@Canalside interpretive themes included in the Visitor Experience Plan ²⁶ discussed in the Historical Context Section.

The exhibits would provide more in-depth interpretive content for those visitors seeking more detailed information and a more profound EC2025@Canalside experience.

Additionally, the content would be utilized by schools to supplement their curricula on the history of the Erie Canal during visits to the Longshed. EC2025@Canalside experiences will meet NYSDE standards to appeal to the broadest grade 4-12 educational experiences.



Figure 28: Chicago Architecture Center City Model Experience, photo by James Steinkamp

Western Terminus & Ruins

Continuation of Initial Story

The ECHDC and CHAG envision utilizing the Western Terminus, Ruins, and possibly the Main Canal to continue the initial EC2025@Canalside story from the Longshed.

The concept is to utilize these areas to supplement the key interpretive themes initially shared in the Longshed building so that all the ECHDC-managed areas within Canalside are activated and integrated with EC2025@Canalside to help visitors **“Step Back In Time.”**

Experience

Currently, the Western Terminus and Ruins are underutilized in terms of creating additional experiences for visitors to Canalside. A series of wayside interpretive panels touch on key interpretive themes around the Terminus and Ruins. Still, many are over ten years old, have outlived their usefulness, and most importantly, are visually busy and confusing for visitors to read.



Figure 29a: Exterior Interpretive Signage

Consequently, the concept is to start anew and create a series of integrated, engaging, and easily understandable interpretive experiences (ex. panels, kiosks, multi-media, augmented reality, QR codes, or other) that supplement the EC2025@Canalside stories shared in the Longshed. (Figure 29a, 29b, 29c & 29d)



Figure 29b: Connecting the Past with the Future with Augmented Reality

Specifically, the ECHDC and CHAG envision utilizing these areas to tell the human and hidden histories of the Canal District, a key EC2025@Canalside interpretive theme.

No matter the interpretive devices selected to tell the stories, they can be enhanced by utilizing archival photos, illustrations, and maps to help visitors visualize and understand the people, buildings, and businesses that inhabited Canalside during Buffalo's Erie Canal era.

The approach will also help pull together the disconnected and detached Erie Canal elements from the site to tell a more cohesive story.

The CHAG will be generating a list of people, businesses, and buildings and their backstories to provide content to the consultant working on the project.

"Step Back In Time" to connect Buffalo's past with it's future.



Figure 29c: Archaeological Virtual Reality



Figure 29d: Eternal Notre-Dame VR Experience

Main Canal

Evening Historical Projection Show

To help visitors **"Step Back In Time,"** the ECHDC and CHAG envision using the Main Canal, towpaths, and surrounding buildings to create a historical projection show accompanied by music. This approach extends and supplements the visitor experiences and stories being told in the Longshed, Western Terminus, and Ruins. (Figure 30a & 30b)

Like the multi-media presentation in the Longshed, the ECHDC and CHAG are not wholly committed to this experience if another seems more appropriate. However, these experiences are an entertaining and exciting way to share a complex story and appeal to a diverse audience, including people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.



Figure 30a: WaterFire Providence, Rhode Island

Examples

Currently, many examples of historical projection shows exist the world over. Some shows activate entire sites with image projection, light show, and an accompanying soundtrack utilizing the facades or the insides of historic buildings like castles, churches, and ruins. Others use aquatic surfaces as their projection canvass and integrate water features into the shows.



Figure 30b: Historical Sound and Projection Light Show at the Château Royal de Blois

Below are few examples that the ECHDC and CHAG referenced as part of the visioning for EC2025@Canalside:

Outdoor:

1. Santiago de Compostela: Fuegos del Apostol 2018
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlHRM8LeebU&t=7s>
2. Museo del Prada 200 years
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9cjG69TfNM>
3. Glow Festival Eindhoven, Netherlands: De Augustijnenkerk
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xbic7YWg_-U
4. Dame de Cour: Notre Dame de Paris
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pMUSHxhYmQ>
5. WaterFire: Providence Rhode Island
<https://inkct.com/2015/10/waterfire-providence-elemental-alchemy/>
6. Prague Astronomical Clock: 600 Year Anniversary Show
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14r4nZEdoXs>

Indoor:

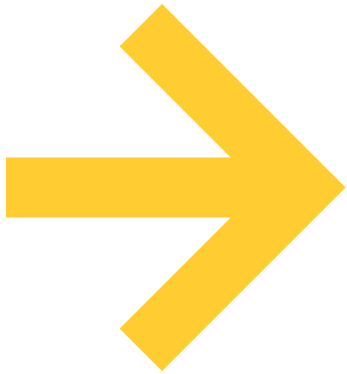
- Currents: Niagara's Power Transformed
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2v9wCzAmGak>
- Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZkQSjZYsgc>



09. SCOPE OF WORK

Each of the three projects listed above will include the following scope of work:

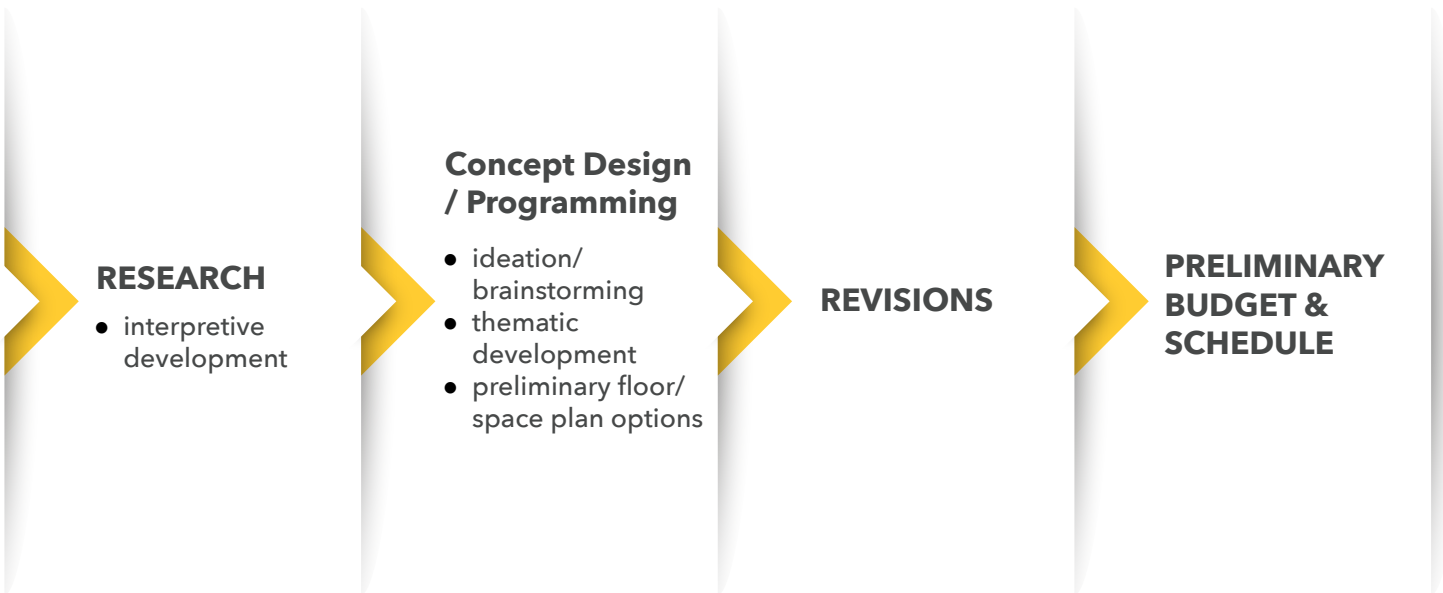
**CONNECTING BUFFALO'S
PAST WITH IT'S FUTURE**



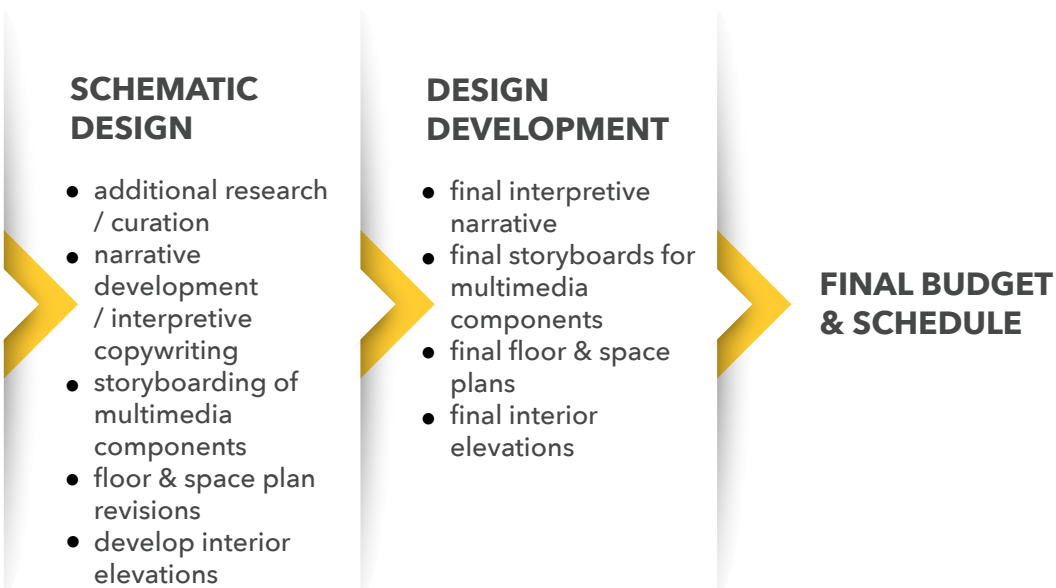
SCOPE OF WORK

Each of the three projects listed above will include the following scope of work:

PHASE I: DEVELOPMENT (To include:)



PHASE II: DESIGN (To include:)



PHASE III: IMPLEMENTATION (To include:)

CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

- final construction drawings for all 2D & 3D components
- final graphic files

PRODUCTION & FABRICATION

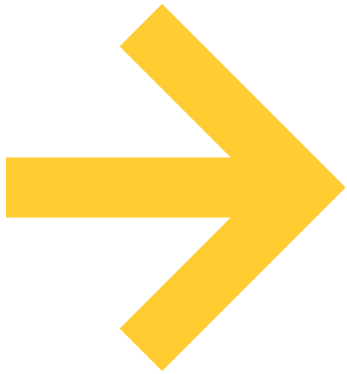
- fabricate all 2D & 3D components
- multimedia production
- procure all multimedia components

INSTALLATION

- onsite installation of all 2D & 3D components
- onsite installation of multimedia components
- testing & fine-tuning of all multimedia components
- address punch list items
- final adjustments

PROJECT CLOSEOUT

- manuals & warranties
- staff training
- maintenance materials
- maintenance schedule



10. BUDGET

The ECHDC has set aside a total of 4.5 million dollars for EC2025@Canalside and has allocated funding between the three visitor experiences detailed above.

However, the ECHDC understands that the budget is fungible, meaning the funding is interchangeable between each visitor experience as long as the budget does not surpass \$4.5M.

If the budget does exceed \$4.5M, the interpretive elements may need to be value-engineered, or the ECHDC will have to pursue other funding sources not yet identified.

The Longshed (3,000,000)

The ECHDC arrived at this budget number by investigating projects of similar size and scope and speaking with various cultural institutions and consultants to arrive at this budget.

The calculation used Longshed's 3,000 square feet multiplied by a per square cost of \$1,000 for a multi-media presentation.

Western Terminus and Ruins (\$400,000)

The ECHDC and CHAG envision that the interpretive experiences for the Western Terminus and Ruins, and possibly around the Main Canal and towpaths if budget permits, will be permanent elements to Canalside and outlive EC2025@Canalside. Consequently, some details may require power for lighting or multi-media features incorporated into the interpretive experiences.

The ECHDC and CHAG realize permanence is relative, but the idea is that the interpretive experiences developed for EC2025@Canalside will likely last approximately ten years before they outlive their usefulness. At that time, outdated and worn elements will require replacement.

Main Canal (\$1,100,000)

The ECHDC has set aside \$1.1M for the evening historical projection show. Obviously, costs will be determined by the scope of the project. We understand that the mapping techniques, technology, software, hardware, and design approaches are frequently changing.

11. Desired Visitor Outcomes

The desired visitor outcomes for EC2025@Canalside are directly associated with the vision of success and purpose statements originally established in the Visitor Experience Plan.²⁷

Purpose Statement

The purpose statement for EC2025@Canalside creates the foundation for the development of the visitor experiences for the bicentennial commemoration.

The purpose statement for the EC2025@Canalside is:

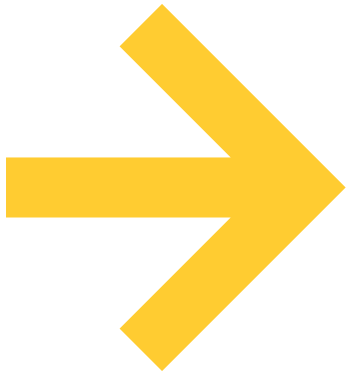
To commemorate Erie Canal's Bicentennial at Canalside in a fun, festive, and participative way to create once-in-a-lifetime memories for the community.

Vision Statement

If the visitor experiences stay true to this purpose, then the ECHDC and CHAG will realize their vision of success for the commemoration, stating:

We are Buffalo's bustling "city square," reconnecting the community to the Erie Canal's 200-year-old history at its Western Terminus, sparking enduring exploration into our cultural heritage.

CONNECTING BUFFALO'S PAST WITH IT'S FUTURE



12. ENDNOTES

¹ Brian McAlonie, "Erie Canal 2025 at Canalside Visitor Experience Planning: Phase 1," Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation, 2021.

² "Land Acknowledgement," D'Youville College, Accessed August 18, 2022, <http://www.dyc.edu/about/leadership/initiatives/land-acknowledgement.aspx>.

³ Peter L. Bernstein, *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation* (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2005), 26.

⁴ Ibid, 26.

⁵ Ibid, 312.

⁶ Ibid, 311.

⁷ Ibid, 310.

⁸ Ibid, 22.

⁹ "The History of Buffalo: A Chronology Buffalo, New York: 1800-1831," Buffalo Architecture and History, Accessed July, 14, 2022, <https://buffaloah.com/h/1831.html#1813>.

¹⁰ "Buffalo Timeline," NPS Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site," Accessed June 17, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/thri/buffalotimeline.htm>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation," Empire State Development, Accessed July 27, 2022, <https://esd.ny.gov/erie-canal-harbor-development-corporation-0>.

¹³ "Buffalo Timeline," NPS Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site," Accessed June 17, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/thri/buffalotimeline.htm>.

¹⁴ National Museum of the American Indian," *Haudenosaunee Guide for Educators* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2009), 1.

¹⁵ Thomas X. Grasso, "The Erie Canal's Western Terminus-Commerical Slip, Harbor Development and Canal District Guidebook," (Buffalo, NY: Canal Society of New York, funded in part by the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation), 5. Accessed July 7, 2022, <https://buffaloah.com/h/bflo/grasso.pdf>.

¹⁶ Peter L. Bernstein, *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation* (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2005), 25.

¹⁷ Ibid, 361.

¹⁸ Ibid, 11.

¹⁹ Mike Vogel, "Era Dates & Milestones," Canal History Advisory Group, October 26, 2016, 1.

²⁰ Mike N. Vogel, Edward N. Patton, and Paul F. Redding, *America's Crossroads Buffalo's Canal Street/Dante Place, The Making of a City* (Buffalo N.Y: Heritage Press, Western New York Heritage Institute, 1993), Forward.

²¹ Ibid, 2.

²² Mike Vogel, "Canal Era Historical Narrative," Canal History Advisory Group, November 13, 2020, 1.

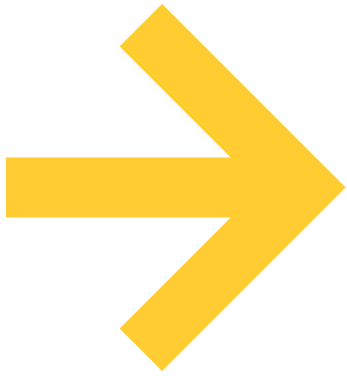
²³ Mike Vogel, "Era Dates & Milestones," Canal History Advisory Group, October 26, 2016, 2.

²⁴ Jocelyn Dodd, "Interactivity and Social Inclusion," Paper given at Interactive Learning in Museums of Art and Design Conference, May 17-18, 2002.

²⁵ George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 31.

²⁶ Brian McAlonie, "Erie Canal 2025 at Canalside Visitor Experience Planning: Phase 1," Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation, 2021.

²⁷ Ibid.



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